DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 084 825 EM 011 644

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| TITLE | School for Documentalists and Special Librarians. |
| PUB DATE | Nov 71 |
| NOTE | 7p.; Paper presented at the International Conference on Training for Information Work (Rome, Italy, November 15 through 19, 1971) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29 |
| DESCRIPTORS | Higher Education; Librarians; *Library Education; *Library Instruction; *Library Schools; *Library Science; Program Descriptions |
| IDENTIFIERS | La Plata National University Argentina; LPNUA; LPNUA School Documentalists; Special Librarians |

ABSTRACT

A description of the School for Documentalists and Special Librarians of La Plata National University in Argentina is provided. Some background material pertinent to the founding of the School is presented and the administrative relationship of the School to the University is discussed. Entrance requirements are specified, the course of study is outlined and the types of degrees awarded are listed. (PB)

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Argentina -

# SCHOOL FOR DOCUMENTALISTS AND SPECIAL LIBRARIANS (Escuela de documentalistas y bibliotecarios especializados)

## Antecedents in Argentina

In Argentina there is no school specifically devoted to the training of documentalists or of assistants of information. The antecedents that exist on this matter are: the first Course of documentalists that was delivered at the Facultad de Ciencias Exactas de la Universidad de Buenos Aires (School of Exact Sciences of Buenos Aires University) in 1952 and was sponsored by the Dirección Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (National Direction for Scientific and Technical Research); the Regional Course, organized by the Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (National Council for Scientific and Technical Research) and the Centro de Cooperación Científica para la América Latina de la UNESCO, this course took place in 1964 (23 November-19 December); the Course of documentation for researchers, sponsored by the Centre for Scientific Documentation of the CONICET, this course was delivered in 1966 (11 July-5 August. In 1969 and 1970 similar courses were delivered again at the CONICET and finally, in 1970, in the Central Library of La Plata University, Prof.Eng. Marcel Van Dijk delivered a course on "Automation and industrial information". This course was specially programmed for the School of Documentalists and Special Librarians that comes inder the Central Library of La Plata University.

## Antecedents in other countries

At the international level, more and more differentiation is being made between the training of the librarians that will work at national, public and primary schools libraries, and that of the documentalists and assistants of information that will perform their duties at special libraries, academies, documentation centres, company information services, public administration offices, etc.

Prof. H. Borko says in "Information Science: What is it? (American Doc. v.19, nº1, January 1966 pp.3-5): "Information science has become an interdisciplinary science derived or connected to such disciplines as mathematics, logics, linguistics, psychology, informatics, operative research, graphic arts, communication, librarianship, management, etc."

## Aims of the "School for Documentalists and Special Librarians"

The aims of this School are to train personnel who will work at special and university libraries, documentation and information centres, laboratories, public offices and industrial firms.

To organize a School for documentalists which does not presently exist in our country. In this way library teaching is characterized and overlapping with existing schools of librarianship is avoided. In La Plata, the specifically library training is in charge of the Escuela Superior de Bibliotecología that comes under the provincial Government. The purpose of this new School of La Plata National University is to train specialists in information science, in the use of sources and reference services in order that they can collaborate with researchers, professors, technicians, public officials and students. In the

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setting up of this School it has also been taken into account the technological and socio economic aspects of the area which is under the influence of La Plata National University.

Academic and administrative dependence

To determine the convenience of the fact that this School works in the University Central Library, the following antecedents have been taken into account as far as the academic and administrative aspects are concerned:

a) The experience of more advanced countries in the development of this discipline and where similar schools work. With reference to the inclusion of Schools of Librarians into the structure of university libraries, two well known specialists -L. Wilson and M. Taubersay in "La biblioteca universitaria", Unión Panamericana,1963: "The librarian acts as Director of the Library and Dean of the School, and manages both budgets, controls both groups of employées and is free to join as he wishes both the interests of library and school. Presently, several of the oldest and best reputed schools for librarians are under the control of heads who also manage the libraries. In general, a librarian-dean is paid higher than a librarian is; he belongs to the teaching staff and therefore he has direct contact with the whole teaching staff to wich -as we already said- he belongs. The problems that these two types of organisations pose include both teaching and administrative relations".

b) The existence of an ideal laboratory of work such as the Documentation Centre of the University Library.

c) As a coordinating instrument of the library system, the Central Library keeps a close relation with all the University schools through their representatives, i.e. the professors who make up the Library Advisory Commission and at the same time act as the School Academic Advisory Committee.

d) The Central Library has class-rooms specially fitted for teaching purposes and the students have the oportunity to know the Library works.

e) The administrative organization of the Library facilitates the activities of the School without an increase in personnel expenses.

Dependence

The School for Documentalists and Special Librarians comes under the chief authorities of the University (i.e. it comes under the Superior Council or under the Presidency, as far as the academic or the administrative aspects are concerned).

Place and timetable: La Plata National University Library. Monday through Friday since 4 pm.

Librarianship studies planning

Librarianship studies are made up of compulsory courses (theoretical and practical) and optional courses which will let the students to choose from according to their own interest.

Nevertheless, according to the system of credits the studentswill have to include a definite number of optional courses to

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reach the total number of credits required to obtain the diploma.

Systems of credits

Taking into account that the plan of studies covers a high number of special courses and that the student has the possibility to choose from optional courses, a unit of value called "credit" for each subject.

Academic admission requirements

a) complete secondary school studies.

b) basic English and French knowledge. The students who have this basic knowledge and are able to read and translate these languages into Spanish, will be allowed to sit the examinations of the training courses at the School of Humanities of La Plata University as free students. If they pass these examinations they will be allowed to start librarianship studies. The rest of the students must attend the training courses already mentioned at the School of Humanities and sit and pass the examinations before obtaining the 50% of the credits required for the diploma.

c) some knowledge or typewriting. The students will be tested on this matter.

d) preparatory entrance course

e) personal interview about the students vocation at the moment of enrollment.

Requirement to obtain the diploma

a) to have obtained 68 credits, 63 of which must belong to the compulsory courses.

b) to have worked in a library 100 hours running. 50% of them will be accomplished in La Plata University Library and the rest can be accomplished in other libraries that the Direction of the School considerés more suitable from the point of view of their organization.

c) during the development of their studies the students must pass two written tests on librarianship subjects.

d) They must also write a monograph.

e) They must have the 80% of the attendance to the classes. The attendance is compulsory and no freee pupils are admitted.

Diploma granted

1. Documentalist. Requirement: Fulfil the requirements to obtain the diploma. See points a,b,c,d and e, above. The 68 credits and the other requirements can be fulfiled in about six semesters.

2. Licenciate in documentation. Requirement: a) To obtain the diploma in documentation fulfiling the requieeement stated in poin 1.
   b) To present a research work
   c) To pass four optional subjects belonging to one area of specialization. The choice of these four optional subjects (high level) must be subjected to the Advisory Academic Council for its approval. If the student has already taken a degrée he has only to present the research work stated in b).

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Issue of certificates

The School of Documentalists and Special Librarians will issue attendance certificates to vocational students according to the organic law of national Argentine universities.

The diplomas stated in 1 and 2 will be granted by La Plata University and the School for Documentalists and Special Librarians.

Methodology

1. Theoretical and practical classes

The training of documentalists and special librarians who will have to perform their duties in university libraries, information and documentation centres, companies and public offices, will have as a main object to work out problems of organization, running and management of services. The students must develop their capacity of analysis and must be able to apply their knowledge to the actual working of the services and their (professional) tools.

The traditional reading method will be used but nevertheless the debate method will be put into practice as far as possible in order to give the students the chance to participate in the class.

2. Laboratory method

The students can work individually or in groups. The Documentation Centre of the La Plata University Library is an excellent laboratory to develop reference, bibliography and documentation work, and the students can also practice information science and librarianship at the corresponding section of the Centre. Besides, the invaluable material kept in the Library "Reserve" will be equally taken into account for History of book, Paleography and relevant subjects.

When the moment comes the different departments of the Central Library will be also used to increase the students' experience in professional work.

3. Syllabus and basic bibliography

At the beginning of the academic year the teachers will present the bibliography corresponding to the syllabus that has been established. The teachers will also prepare "guides" for their classes, questionaires, diagrams and every sort of didactic material that they consider suitable for their teaching. They will also appoint the compulsory reading and the task that the students must perform on it.

4. Visits of study

In different opportunities and with study purposes, the students will visit documentation centres, libraries, graphic works and other institutions considered of interest for the students' professional and technical training.

Entrance course

This course has been planned for the students have a wide view of the characteristics of librarianship studies and their profesional posibilities. This course is delivered every year at the beginning of the academic year and comprises a series of readings on:

- Introduction to documentary knowledge
- Introduction to technical processing
- Introduction to modern mathematics

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- General view on history of book and libraries.

Examinations

For courses number 102,103,105,110,114,115 the students will have to sit two partial exams and for courses number 101,103 A, 104,106,108,109,116,118,118A,118B,124 and 126 the students will sit only one partial exam. These partial exams may be questionaires, tests or any other sort of proof the teacher considers more convenient. Final exams will be written and oral. The students must pass the practical work of each course as well as the pertinent seminary courses to be allowed to sit the final examinations.

There will be examination calls in December, March and July but nevertheless, the School Direction can-for special reasons-appoint additional calls if these do not disturb the normal running of the School.

The subjects attendance and the practical work corresponding to these subjects will be valid for three years.

Scholarships

The School will try to obtain scholarships from the University and from national and international organizations for librarianship students to improve their knowledge and to go on with their studies.

Seminaries and lectures

Due to the dynamic character of librarianship education, seminaries and lectures delivered by specialists on different special and practical subjects will be sponsored and arranged.

Functioning structure

The School will be ruled by a Director who will be its highest authority and by a Secretary.

Academic advisory council

The School will have an Academic Advisory Council which will be made up of the members who form the Advisory Committee of the University Library. The teachers who form this Advisory Committee represent the different schools and high institutes of the University.

The Academic Advisory Council will act as an advisory body to the School in such aspects as the School regulations and their modifications, the competitive contests to appoint teachers and in all other aspects referring the training of technical staff who will work in research centres, libraries and professorships of the University.

Academic Council

The teachers of the School with 30 or more teaching hours and two representative students will form the School Academic Council. The representative students will be chosen annually among the the candidates who have the highest marks and a higher number of credits.

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE COURSES

BASIC COURSES

| Course number | Course | Credit | Hours |
|---|---|---|---|
| 101 | Introduction to documentary knowledge | 2 | 10 |
| 102 | Cataloguing I | 4 | 140 |
| 103 | Bibliography and reference | 4 | 75 |
| 103A | Argentine and latinoamerican bibliography | 1 | 5 |
| 104 | Selection and acquisition | 2 | 20 |
| 105 | Library and book history | 4 | 40 |
| 106 | Book production - Graphic arts | 2 | 20 |
| 107 | Copyright | 1 | 5 |
| 108 | Administrative science I | 3 | 15 |
| 109 | Administrative science II | 3 | 20 |
| 110 | University libraries organization | 3 | 20 |
| 114 | Cataloguing II | 4 | 120 |
| 115 | Classification I | 4 | 30 |
| 116 | Documentation | 4 | 30 |
| 117A | Special bibliographies-Humanities | 3 | 28 |
| | 1. Philosophy | | |
| | 2. Universal literature | | |
| | 3. Argentine literature | | |
| | 4. Universal history | | |
| | 5. Argentine history | | |
| | 6. Geography | | |
| | 7. Educational sciences | | |
| | 8. Sociology | | |
| | 9. Economics | | |
| | 10. Law and social sciences | | |
| | 11. Art | | |
| | 12. Architecture | | |
| 117B | Special bibliographies-Exact and natural sciences | 3 | 34 |
| | 1. Mathematics | | |
| | 2. Physics | | |
| | 3. Chemistry | | |
| | 4. Zoology | | |
| | 5. Botany | | |
| | 6. Agriculture | | |
| | 7. Biomedicine | | |
| | 8. Veterinary sciences | | |
| | 9. Engineering | | |
| | 10. Technology | | |
| | 11. Geology | | |
| 118 | Information processing-Automation | 3 | 20 |
| 118A | Non-conventional tools | 3 | 20 |
| 118B | Analysis of systems | 3 | 30 |
| 120 | Reprography | 2 | 10 |
| 122 | Research methods | 1 | 5 |
| 124 | Elements of mathematics | 4 | 30 |
| 126 | Classification II | 3 | 25 |

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OPTIONAL COURSES

| Course number | Course | Credit | Hours |
|---|---|---|---|
| 105 | Paleography | 1 | 8 |
| 111 | Public libraries | 1 | 3 |
| 112 | Primary school libraries | 1 | 3 |
| 113 | Children libraries and literature for children | 1 | 3 |
| 119 | Audiovisual services | 2 | 10 |
| 121 | Psychology of readers | 2 | 10 |
| 123 | Book edition | 1 | 5 |
| 125 | Archives | 2 | 10 |

Total:
Credits: 74
Hours: 804

October 1971